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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/800,592	03/06/2001	Robert Olan Keith JR.	ABREAU-00103	2681

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EXAMINER

NGUYEN, CAM LINH T

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2161

DATE MAILED: 05/13/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/800,592

Applicant(s)

KEITH, ROBERT OLAN

Examiner

CamLinh Nguyen

Art Unit

2161

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 25 March 2005.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-37 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-37 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 4/14/05.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Amendment

1. This Office Action is response to the request for reconsideration filed on 3/25/2005.
2. Applicant's amendments to claims 1 – 37 are acknowledged. Consequently, claims 1, 11, 20, 30, and 37 have been amended. Claims 1 – 37 are pending.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claims 1 – 37 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Witek et al (U.S. 6,253,188) in view of Botto et al (U.S. 5,604,772).

♦ As per claims 1, 11, 20, 30, 37

Witek discloses a method of performing a research task within a searchable database comprising:

- “Performing a search by utilizing a search module, the search module includes a keyword search, hierarchical search, a dichotomous key search, and a parametric search ...

matching items” See Fig. 1, 7,10. In particular:

- o “A search module” corresponds to the search engine that implemented in Fig. 1.
- o “ A search criteria” corresponds to arguments or selections that user enters in Fig. 7, element 112.
- o “ A searchable database” corresponds to database server (Fig. 1, element 20, col. 9, lines 53 – 55)

Art Unit: 2161

- “One or more matching items” corresponds to the results that sent to user (Fig. 7, element 126 – 128).
- “The search module includes keyword search” See Fig. 10, element 148, col. 29, lines 28 – 34.
- “ A hierarchical search” corresponds to “category search” because the categories include subcategories that organized in a hierarchical order. See Fig. 4, col. 31, lines 4 – 11.
- “ A parametric search” See Fig. 10, elements 154, 158, 160, 142, col. 30, lines 10 – 29.
- “The searchable database is formatted in a directory tree structure” See Fig. 4, col. 18, lines 1 – 32.
- “The directory tree structure includes nodes ... branches” See fig. 4. Each category corresponds to a node. All nodes are linked together.
- “ Selecting one of the matching item” See Fig. 6, element 106 – 110, col. 23, lines 44 – 48.
- “Formatting the collection of related data corresponding to the node of the selected matching item into an encyclopedia-like entry” See Fig. 4, col. 18, lines 1 – 32.
- “ Displaying the encyclopedia-like entry corresponding to the node of the selected matching item” see Fig. 7, element 128- 130.

The Witek reference fails to disclose the dichotomous key search. However, this method search is a well known in the art. Botto provides an example of it.

Art Unit: 2161

Botto teaches that a dichotomous key search is used to search for data in the database 112, wherein the database is a hierarchical database (See Fig. 5, col. 5, lines 26 – 29).

It would have been obvious to one with ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply the teaching of Botto into the invention of Witek because the combination would reduce the memory access when using binary search, and providing user more search methodologies.

◆ As per claims 2, 12, 21, 31, the combination of Witek and Botto disclose:

- “The encyclopedia-like entry includes text, graphics, links...” See Fig. 8 – 10, col. 23, lines 44 – 48, col. 24, lines 10 – 16.

◆ As per claims 3, 13, 22, 32, the combination of Witek and Botto disclose:

- “The search criteria is one or more keywords input by a user” See Fig. 10, element 148, col. 29, lines 28 – 34.

◆ As per claims 4, 14, 23, 33, the combination of Witek and Botto disclose:

- “The utilized search methodology is the hierarchical search, the search criteria is selected one of a list of one or more directory items” A hierarchical search” corresponds to “category search” because the categories include subcategories that organized in a hierarchical order. See Fig. 4, 6 – 7, col. 31, lines 4 – 11.

◆ As per claims 5 – 6, 15 – 16, 24 – 25, 34 – 35, the combination of Witek and Botto disclose:

- “The utilized search methodology is the dichotomous key, the search criteria is a selected one of two binary items” See Fig. 3, element 70, col. 16, lines 27 – 50, Fig. 10, element 144 – 146. As defined in the Specification a “dichotomous key search” is used to instruct users given in an answer or question dialog, often yes or no answer

Art Unit: 2161

(Specification, page 18, lines 6 – 8). In fig. 10, Witek also gives the users the options of answer questions by checking the boxes. Therefore, this search option is corresponding to the “dichotomous key search”.

- “ The utilized search methodology is the parametric search, the search criteria is one or more set parameters, and further wherein the parameters are set by a user” See Fig. 10, elements 154, 158, 160, 142, col. 30, lines 10 – 29. As shown in Fig. 10, a user can set the values for parameters such as date, the range price, or number of room.

◆ As per claims 7, 17, 26, 36, the combination of Witek and Botto disclose:

- “The searchable database is distributed into more than one physical location” See Fig. 1, element 20, col. 9, lines 53 – col. 10, lines 5, col. 25, lines 37 – 44.

◆ As per claims 8 - 10, 18 - 19, 27 – 29, the combination of Witek and Botto disclose:

- “ The steps of performing a search and formatting the collection of related data are performed by a server” See Fig. 1, 5A, col. 25, lines 13 – 33.
- “ Establishing an Internet connection with the server to utilize the search methodologies” See Fig. 5a, element 14, 24, col. 21, lines 15 – 20.

Response to Arguments

5. Applicant's arguments filed 3/25/2005 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Applicant argues that the Witek reference does not teach performing a search in which for any given searching step, at any location within the database, four different search methodologies are available to be used to perform the search. The Examiner respectfully disagrees.

Art Unit: 2161

Applicant also does not clearly claim that “ at any step location within the database, four different methodologies are available to be used to perform the search”. In stead, Applicant only claims that “wherein each utilization of the search module includes the availability of each search”. Therefore, if the Witek reference discloses a search method is available, then the Witek reference still reads on Applicant’s claim language.

Conclusion

6. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the mailing date of this final action.

7. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to CamLinh Nguyen whose telephone number is (571) 272 - 4024. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday.

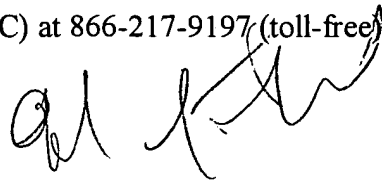
If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner’s supervisor, Safet Metjahic can be reached on (571) 272 - 4023. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Art Unit: 2161

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Nguyen, Cam-Linh

Art Unit 2161



**ALFORD KINDRED
PRIMARY EXAMINER**

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